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WOMEN'S WORK AND WAGES IN THE
UNITED STATES

SUMMARY

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I. CHANGES IN WOMEN'S WORK, 1900-1910

MINIMUM wage legislation became an established fact in nine American states in 1913. In at least as many other states there exists an active propaganda for similar enactments. There is, in consequence, wide interest in questions relating to women's position in the industrial field. As a result we have an excellent and growing literature dealing with these questions of public interest and policy. The initial inquiry may well be: what is the field of women's work in the United States? with the subordinate question: is the nature of her work changing?

The census of 1910 shows a total of 7,608,000 ¹ female wage earners as compared with 5,319,000 in 1900. This is an increase of 43 per cent. In the same decade the number of females 10 years of age and over had increased but 22 per cent. The table following shows in column I the distribution in 1900 and in 1910 by percentages of women workers among the various occupational groups; in column II the percentages of all workers in the occupational groups who are females in these two census years; and in column III the increase in number and in percentage of women workers in 1910 as compared with 1900. The significance of the first column is to disclose which occupational groups are attracting a larger and which a smaller percentage of the total number of women workers; of the second column to show in which occupational group women are gaining, and in which losing ground, as compared with male workers; and of the third to allow a comparison of the increase of women workers in the occupational groups on a numerical and a percentage basis.

	I Per cent of all Female Workers in the Group		II Per cent of all Workers Female		III Increase of Women Wage Earners	
	1900	1910	1900	1910	No.	Per cent
Domestic and Personal Service	39.4	34.4*	37.5	48.9	526,000	25
Manufacturing and Mechanical Pursuits	24.7	23.2*	18.5	16.4	459,000	34
Agriculture	18.4	17.6*	9.4	10.6*	362,000*	37*
Professional Service	8.1	8.8*	34.2	36.9	242,000	56
Trade and Transportation ..	9.5	15.8*	10.6	15.8	699,000	139
Total	100.0	99.8	18.3	20.1*	2,289,000 ²	43*

¹ Vol. iv, Occupation Statistics. This is the corrected figure given on p. 28.

² Ibid., pp. 41 and 57. I have used the corrected figure here also. Figures affected are indicated by an asterisk.

The field of domestic service returned a smaller percentage of the women workers in 1910 than in 1900. The percentage of increase shows that an increase of a half million in the decade is about normal since the total number of women of working age increased 22 per cent. The only marked change shown here is in the increase in the percentage of domestic workers who are female, from 37.5 to 48.9. This clearly indicates a withdrawal of men from these occupations. As a consequence women have a much stronger hold on this, their traditional occupation. Agriculture also claims fewer women in each thousand women at work in 1910 as compared with 1900. In each 1000 agricultural workers of all kinds, however, there were 106 women in 1910; and but 94 in 1900. Tho this increase in the proportion of women to men is considerable, the increase in absolute numbers of women is not striking, and the probability that closer enumeration in 1910 renders the comparison incorrect is great. There is no indication that women are finding a new field here. The gain of women in the professions has been nearly balanced by gains of men. Moreover, the increased number of female workers is nearly all accounted for by those listed as teachers, in the schools and of music and art. New departures here are negligible.

The most striking change disclosed by the table is the enormous increase in the number of female workers in trade and transportation. In each 1000 women wage earners in 1910, 158 are in these occupations. No more than 95 were so engaged ten years earlier. Of each 1000 workers in this field in 1910, 158 were women; but 106, in 1900; and, finally, this group of female workers shows a gain in absolute numbers of nearly 700,000, or 139 per cent. No other occupational group shows so great a gain in numbers; none other approaches their

percentage gain. Analysis of the group in detail shows evidence of new departures in women's work. The field itself is rapidly expanding, as is indicated by the fact that, despite the enormous increase in the number of female workers, in each thousand workers there are but 52 more women than in 1900. Among the various occupations listed here, the saleswomen were most numerous in 1900. They show in 1910 a gain of over 100,000 workers. This is an increase of 67 per cent, or much in excess of the general rate of increase for all women wage earners. But in 1910 their numbers are nearly equalled by the clerks and copyists, with 232,000 workers. This group shows a gain of over 170 per cent. The stenographers and typewriters have, for the first time, passed the saleswomen in point of numbers. Their total is 263,000, and has increased over 200 per cent in the decade. There were 185,000 female book-keepers and accountants in 1910, and their percentage of increase was 150. There were nearly 100,000 telegraph and telephone operators, with a gain well over 300 per cent. Female retail merchants increased in numbers from 34,000 to 62,000, or 82 per cent. Obviously the conclusion to be drawn is, that the development of large-scale business has furnished a field adapted to women's abilities. This field they are entering in numbers exceeding those of men. If there is any radical change in the nature of women's employment, it is in this field. It may be noted in passing that the change is welcome; in addition to the desirable enlargement of women's field of employment, the occupations most rapidly expanding call for education and special training and so rank with the better paid fields of women's employment.

Examination of the returns for women at work in manufactures in 1900 and 1910 discloses evidence of the

steady advance of the industrial revolution. The statistics indicate that women are not gaining ground in this field. The percentage of increase is lower than in any other occupational group, except that of domestic service. Yet readjustments of far-reaching importance are being carried out here. Preparing food, fashioning garments, serving meals, laundering clothes, together with a thousand and one related and subsidiary operations, these are steadily being transferred from the homes to the factories, restaurants and laundries. Significant examples of such change are not far to seek. It is stated that Wisconsin does 50 per cent of the canning of peas in the United States. Of the 75 factories in the state, but four were established before 1900; 21 have been built since 1908.¹ The average number of women wage earners engaged in candy factories was about 14,000 in 1899; 26,000 in 1909. There were 10,000 aiding in preparing bread and bakery products in 1899; nearly 17,000 in 1909.² In the textiles, while the number of women employed in the long established cotton industry increased but 20 per cent, the number employed in hosiery and knitting mills doubled. The combined occupations of dressmakers, milliners, and seamstresses made a gain in the decade of but 10 per cent. In comparison may be placed a gain of 78,000 women workers, 43 per cent, in the combined industries of men's and women's clothing and men's furnishings. The number of women employed in producing shirts, collars and cuffs increased 58 per cent in the decade; glove makers, 87 per cent.

There is evidence of this transferral of work from the home in other fields than manufacturing. Among

¹ Bulletin Industrial Commission of Wisconsin, October, 1913, p. 3.

² Census figures which follow are drawn from vol. viii, Census of Manufacture, and vol. iv, Occupation Statistics.

domestic workers, laundresses numbered 335,000 in 1900, of whom 325,700 were handworkers; less than 10,000 were employed in steam laundries. In 1910 this occupation included 597,000 women, of whom 520,000 were hand workers, and 76,000 steam laundry operators. The increase of factory workers was over 600 per cent; that of home workers less than 60 per cent. Again, of servants and waiters combined, there were 1,284,800 in 1900, of whom 1,242,000 were servants and 42,800 were waiters. In 1910 the combined figure was 1,495,000, of whom 1,309,000 were servants, a slight increase, and nearly 86,000 were waiters, a gain of over 100 per cent. These examples and others which might be given illustrate the continued progress of the industrial revolution. Obviously the change now taking place affects most largely the fields traditionally occupied by women. Just as the New England women followed their work as spinners and weavers from the rural home to the urban factory, women today, if they are to maintain their position as preparers of food and garments, must leave the home for the factory. Thus work is being transferred from family control to corporate management. The home is less a workshop. The family is no longer the industrial, tho it remains the social unit. Where this transformation will stop is not yet apparent. The past decade shows a rapidity of change seldom equalled, and we may expect, with the growing urbanization of our population, a continuance of this rapid movement. It is to be noted that this brings more women within the ken of the Census. It means more work done by women outside the home, tho there may still be room to doubt whether it means that the total amount of work done by women is greater. It thus means that increasing importance will attach to problems of women's work and wages.

II. WOMEN'S WAGES

It is to the women workers in the rapidly expanding field in trade and transportation, the shifting field in manufacturing, and to certain groups in the domestic field, as waiters and laundry workers, that investigation and discussion of minimum wage laws have principally related. It should be emphasized at the outset that the term minimum wage is, in a sense, a misnomer, since our legislation has defined a reasonable living wage rather than the bare minimum necessary to eke out a comfortless existence. Of the eight states, excluding Utah's flat rate, defining the measure of a minimum wage, all are practically in line with California's statute, which declares that it should be "not less than a wage adequate to supply to such women and minors the necessary cost of proper living and to maintain their health and welfare."¹ And so far as the phraseology of the statutes has found practical application in the acts of wage boards and commissions there is clear evidence of an intent to carry out such a liberal interpretation. These early wage determinations, under the statutes, and the results of various investigations, agree that such living wages under American conditions will be more than \$8.00 per week.² There is substantial agree-

¹ With this may be compared the statement of Sidney Webb: "The object being to secure the community against the evils of industrial parasitism, the minimum wage for a man or woman respectively ought theoretically to be determined by practical inquiry as to the cost of the food, clothing and shelter physiologically necessary, according to national habit and custom, to prevent bodily and mental deterioration. Such a minimum would, therefore, be low, and though its establishment would be welcomed as a boon by the unskilled worker in the unregulated trades, it would not at all correspond with the conception of a 'living wage' formed by the cotton operatives or the coal miners." "The Economic Theory of a Legal Minimum Wage," *Journal of Political Economy*, 1913, pp. 993-994.

² A detailed statement of the estimates of various boards and commissions will be published by the present writer in the *Quarterly Publications of the American Statistical Association* for March, 1915.

ment also that \$7.00 represents about the level of a bare existence.

If these figures represent the level above which eight states are pledged to hold women's wages and the goal toward which other states with active minimum wage propaganda are striving, it becomes of highest importance to learn what the actual level of wages is and how great the proposed change may prove to be. In answering this inquiry we have abundant, tho not always entirely satisfactory, data. The investigation of the Bureau of Labor covered over 100,000 women wage earners 16 years of age and over. These were found in the cotton, men's clothing, glass and silk industries; in factories and in various selected industries. Unfortunately only a small proportion of the 35,000 workers in stores can be classified as to age. Of these 100,000 workers, 18.6 per cent received under \$4.00 in the representative week for which wage quotations were taken. Nearly 49 per cent received under \$6.00; and nearly 77 per cent under \$8.00. This leaves but 23 per cent of these workers receiving the living wage agreed upon by our minimum wage investigations, and suggests that fully 50 per cent received less than the amount which investigators agree represents the lowest subsistence wage. The more comprehensive report of the Census Bureau in 1905 covered more than 588,000 female workers over 15 years of age, in manufacture, and gives almost identical results: it shows 18.4 per cent receiving under \$4.00 per week; 49.8 per cent under \$6.00; and 77.9 per cent under \$8.00. The reports of the Immigration Commission dealt with industries in which immigrant, and by inference low paid, labor was especially prominent. The age division was put at 18 years and the wage limits quoted at \$5.00

and \$7.50. Without presenting the evidence in detail it may be stated that approximately half of the females over 17 years of age listed received less than \$7.50 per week.

To this may be added the general results reported in the admirable intensive study made of cotton, confectionery, laundry and store workers by the Massachusetts Commission on Minimum Wage Boards. This included nearly 12,000 women over 18 years of age, of whom nearly 10 per cent received less than \$4.00 per week; 38.9 per cent under \$6.00; and 68.6 per cent under \$8.00. There is available a wealth of data from other states, cities and industries, which serves to reinforce the conclusion that of women at work, *i. e.* those 16 years of age and over, outside the homes and the professions, almost half earn less than \$6.00 in a representative week; and approximately three-fourths less than \$8.00. It is obvious at once that any attempt to raise the general level of women's wages to \$8.00, or even \$7.00 per week, will mean a vast amount of rearrangement of wage scales, labor forces, and possibly of industries.

It should be noted here, however, that the wage investigations have reported actual earnings, while the basis of the reports of the wage commissions has rather been rates of wages. These rates of wages, in some instances at least, including an allowance for unemployment.¹ The correct measurement of this allowance thus becomes a matter of prime importance if the wage boards are rightly to estimate the living wage intended by the statute. Unfortunately at this point our information is woefully inadequate. We have

¹ The Kansas City study allows \$1.00 for "incidentals, sickness, unemployment." See Report on the Wage Earning Women of Kansas City, p. 80. Several estimates include an allowance for a vacation.

indications that the allowance should be considerable. Thus, the Bureau of Labor investigation made certain comparisons between actual and full time earnings in the representative week. Workers in cotton mills in New England earned from 80 to 87 per cent of full time pay; in southern mills from 76 to 80 per cent, if we omit the abnormal case of the doffers who made but 60 per cent of full time pay. Women working on men's clothing lost from 10 to 13 per cent of each week, in Chicago, Rochester, New York, and Philadelphia; and over 20 per cent in Baltimore. Female silk workers in New Jersey show a loss of from 6 to 15 per cent in various important occupations, the most frequent percentage being nine. The losses were greater in Pennsylvania in practically every case.¹ Since the great majority of female workers are but little skilled, it is highly significant that the lowest percentages of lost time are incurred by the more skilled women. So far as these indications go it would seem very conservative to conclude that, on the average, women workers lose 10 per cent of full time earnings in each week. Which is to say that on the basis of a \$7.00 or \$8.00 minimum wage, something like 80 cents would need to be added to cover the loss through unemployment if the present organization were to continue.

Even so, the allowance would only cover time lost within the week. The effect of seasonal fluctuation and lost weeks and months is still to be reckoned with. For the measurement of this loss data are almost entirely

¹ The Connecticut Report shows; —

	No. of Workers	Average Actual Weekly Earnings	Computed Full Time Earnings	Percentage of Actual to Full Earnings
Cotton (p. 67.)	942	\$8.05	\$9.17	87.7
Silk (p. 91)	1175	6.26	7.40	84.5
Metal (p. 200)	2544	6.50	7.41	87.7

lacking. We are not yet in a position to make any scientific measurement of such loss in the various trades. That it is of the greatest importance in certain seasonal trades in which women are most largely engaged is generally believed.¹ A suggestive comparison may be made between weekly and annual earnings of women in manufacturing pursuits as reported by the Immigration Commission:

	No. Re- ported ²	Aver- age Week- ly Earn- ings	For 52 Weeks	No. Re- ported ²	Actual Annual Earn- ings	Percentage Actual Earnings of 52 Times Average Weekly
Native Born, Native Parents:						
White	9,019	\$7.91	\$411.32	338	\$365.00	88
Black	17	6.80	...	10	106.00	..
Native Born, Foreign Parents	15,930	8.11	421.72	875	339.00	80
Foreign Born	32,746	7.90	410.80	2,386	284.00	69
Totals	57,712	\$7.96	\$413.92	3,609	\$304.00	73

Here the number reporting annual earnings is too small to insure its representative character, but the suggestion is that lost time, other than the loss of hours during the week, may amount to from 12 to 30 per cent for women workers.⁴ The table shows, also, greatest loss for the least efficient worker. Such a loss must prove beyond

¹ Van Kleeck, *Artificial Flower Makers*, p. 72. "A rough comparison would indicate that the tax made by irregular employment on the income of flower makers amounts to about two dollars a week — a sum by no means insignificant." *Ibid.*, *Women in the Bookbinding Trade*, p. 86. "But the estimate of yearly earnings shows that even though bindery girls find other work in dull season the median yearly income from all their occupations is about \$308.00, indicating a loss of more than \$50 in twelve months. This is not a small loss when the fact is realized that very few bindery girls earn \$500 or more in a year."

² *Imm. Comm.*, vol. xix, p. 113.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁴ Cf. *Massachusetts Report*, p. 51. This shows a loss of 64 cents per week because of lost weeks sustained by 469 candy workers who worked a full year for the same firm. This is based on a weekly average of less than \$6.00, pp. 158, 539; laundry workers lost about 18 cents per week, on the same basis.

the reach of minimum wage legislation,¹ the most probable remedy being found in reorganization of the industry.

III. CAUSES OF LOW WAGES

Aside from the loss caused by unemployment, the earnings of women fall below the level approved by wage commissions for various reasons. Of considerable importance is the fact of the immobility of the female labor force. Women are less independent, less able to move than are men. The husband and father is the chief wage earner, and other members of the family perforce accompany him to his most advantageous location. Men flow naturally to any point offering opportunities for labor. It seems more natural for the employer of women to take his plant to the labor force.² This interference of family ties with the mobility of woman wage earners results in congestion and consequent low wages in certain localities or even in sections of partic-

¹ The only comprehensive figures available are from the Census of 1900, Volume on Occupations, pp. cccxxv, and cccxxviii.

WOMEN WAGE EARNERS, TEN YEARS OF AGE AND OVER, UNEMPLOYED FOR

	1-3 Months		4-6 Months		7-12 Months		Total	Per cent of all Females in the Group
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent		
Domestic and Personal Service	151,000	42.2	149,000	41.7	57,700	16.1	358,000	17.1
Trade and Transportation	21,900	39.3	19,500	34.9	14,400	25.8	56,000	11.1
Manufacture	147,000	50.0	140,000	35.4	43,000	14.6	294,000	22.4

The table indicates that a very considerable percentage of women workers are unemployed some part of the year, and that of those so unemployed, over half are idle for four months or more. We are warned, however, that "caution must be observed in reaching conclusions based solely upon" these statistics.

² See for example, Bureau of Labor Report, vol. iv, p. 47; a statement that inducements were offered silk mills to enter the anthracite coal region. Vol. xviii, p. 252; a paper box manufacturer enlarged his plants in a Polish neighborhood to take advantage of the cheap female labor there available.

ular localities.¹ This would seem the true reason for the lack of standardization in women's wage noted by certain investigations.² Ten cents a day for carfare may easily negative search for employment beyond walking range if the weekly wage be very low.³ This factor, however, is of local importance only. However much it may oppress the individual worker or whatever its effects in dictating the location of women employing industries, it does not affect the general wage level.

Of prime importance in determining the low wage of women workers is the question of age.⁴ Youth and low earning capacity are found together. In the New England cotton industry ⁵ of 9,246 women over 21, but 10.6 per cent earned under \$4.00 per week and 39 per cent earned over \$8.00. Over two-thirds earned over \$6.00. Statistics for Massachusetts show that these percentages are maintained in practically all age groups to the age of 55. On the other hand, in a total of 1,638, 16 and 17 years of age, nearly a quarter earned less than \$4.00 and less than 12 per cent earned over \$8.00. Of 2,860 aged 18 to 20, 15.7 per cent earned under \$4.00 and 23.4 per cent over \$8.00. Corresponding data for southern mills show a similar situation. Full earning capacity is not reached before the age of 21. The

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. iii, pp. 406 et seq. This is strikingly illustrated in the glass industry. A comparison of four unskilled occupations in thirteen establishments within a radius of fifty miles of the central one shows a wide variation in wages. In grinding, for example, wages vary from \$3.60 to \$8.70 per week. The comment is: "women glass-makers are so far from being a completely mobile labor force that even moderate mobility is rather uncommon. The reason is clear. Such persons for the most part are active members of families."

² This runs through the Massachusetts Report. See p. 12 where the explanation is "the personal equation of the employer," and "the helplessness of their employees."

³ Van Kleeck, *Flower Makers*, p. 74. "Flower makers in New York do not come from a distance to their work. They live near by and save carfare. Only nine of those interviewed reported that they paid carfare going to and from the shops."

⁴ Bureau of Labor Report, vol. v, p. 25. "It would seem, therefore, from the study of both age and experience that one of the determining factors in the wage problem is age."

⁵ Bureau of Labor Report, vol. i, pp. 699-706 and 715-716.

numbers reported in the age groups are highly suggestive. In New England the years 16 to 20 inclusive include almost a third of the women reported; in southern mills, almost a half. Similarly in the men's clothing industry,¹ full earning capacity is reached at 21, and maintained to 45 years of age. About 35 per cent of those within these ages earned more than \$8.00 per week. Of those 18 to 20 and 45 to 54 years of age but one-fourth attained that result. While of those 16 and 17 and 55 and over, only one-ninth earned so much. It is then highly significant that more than half of the 10,700 workers covered were under 21 years of age. In both of these industries the number of female workers over 45 years of age is very small.

Combination of the statistics of twelve important industries reported by the Bureau of Labor gives the following results:²

AGES AND WAGE GROUPS IN TWELVE SELECTED INDUSTRIES

Age	Number	Per cent Under \$4.00	Per cent Under \$6.00	Per cent Under \$8.00	Per cent Over \$8.00
16-17	9,918	28.4	69.0	91.5	8.4
18-20	13,769	19.2	57.1	79.9	20.1
21-24	8,617	10.1	35.3	69.1	30.9
25 and over	11,904	12.6	36.8	66.1	33.9

The combined results thus secured are similar to those in the cotton and men's clothing industries. Full earning capacity is not reached before 21 years of age. Even among those beyond this age, hardly a third reached the limit of a living wage in the representative week. Yet we note that there were more workers aged 16 to 17 reported than from 21 to 24; and more aged 18 to 20 than for all ages 25 and over. This is the com-

¹ Bureau of Labor Report, vol. ii, pp. 596-599.

² *Ibid.*, vol. xviii, pp. 436 et seq. The industries were; Cigarettes, Cigars, Confectionery, Corsets, Crackers, Hardware, Hosiery, Paper boxes, Shirts, Enameled Ware, Tobacco, Woolens.

bined result of twelve important industries. A careful examination of the other evidence¹ in the bureau's report and in various state investigations adds nothing to the above showing except the assurance that these are in every respect typical data. Overlooking local and industrial variations the conclusion is justified that full earning capacity for women workers is not reached before the age of 21, and that earnings decrease after 45 and in some cases earlier.²

The statistics presented offer evidence as to the relative number in each age group, but in view of the importance of this factor the more comprehensive report of the census may be stated. For this inquiry the Census of 1910 is highly unsatisfactory. It shows that 7.9³ per cent of all female workers are under 16 years of age; 22.9 per cent from 16 to 20; 53.3 per cent from 21 to 44, and 16 per cent 45 and over. There is, however, no division of the large and highly important group of workers aged 21 to 44, and no occupational classification by age is given. In 1900, 9.2 per cent were under 16 years of age, 23.3 per cent of all women at work were from 16 to 20 years of age; 16.9 per cent from 21 to 25, and 22.0 per cent from 25 to 35. This means that nearly half the female workers were under 25, and over seven-tenths under 35 years of age. In manufacturing 36 per cent were under 21; 54 per cent under 25, and 77 per cent under 35. The corresponding percentages are even higher in trade and transportation. The data of the two Census reports are not strictly comparable, because of the fact that the percentage of

¹ Especially suggestive are the displays of hourly earning by sex and age in detail. These show clearly the rise and fall of earning capacity, and emphasize strongly the connection of youth and low wages.

² Bureau of Labor Report, vol. ii, p. 146. Men's Clothing Industry. "The information conveyed by these tables may be summarized as follows; Earnings between the ages of 21 and 34 are better than before or after."

³ Census, 1910, vol. iv, p. 69.

children at work has somewhat decreased in the decade; but there is nothing to indicate that the percentage divisions within the limits 21 to 45 have changed.

Available data, then, suggest that of all women at work in America in manufacture and trade almost one-fourth are from 16 to 20 years of age. Of this fourth probably half earn under \$6.00 per week, and 80 per cent under \$8.00. Another fourth are from 21 to 25 years of age. Of these one-third earn under \$6.00, and from 60 to 70 per cent under \$8.00. The smaller numbers of more advanced ages employed do not receive higher average wages. It is an evil combination that is found here: lack of skill, training, and experience, joined with the irresponsibility of youth, and great congestion in the labor market. The recurring statement in the bureau report is that the demand on these female workers is for dexterity and speed.¹ These qualities are possessed in youth and are offered in abundance. Skill and training these workers neither have nor attempt to acquire. For their working life is to be short and they are forced by economic pressure to seek the highest present earnings. They have followed their work from the home to the factory. Through marriage they intend to make good their retreat to the home. This expectation is realized; for, omitting the negro women, less than four per cent of married women are returned as breadwinners. The higher earnings reported for women, then, are received by comparatively few, those who remain in the shops after the great mass of their fellow workers have left. Their gain in experience and skill accounts for part of the gain in wages; increased seriousness and steadiness for more. They earn more. But the evidence shows

¹ E. g., Bureau of Labor Report, vol. xviii, p. 131. Confectionery workers. "What the girls do is quickly learned, and requires chiefly deft and rapid movements, so that years add little to a worker's earning capacity, if indeed, they do not decrease it."

little progress after 21, and loss after 45. Here, then, is a worthy suggestion for another line of attack upon the low wages of women aside from minimum wage laws. Every rise in the age limit for entering employment; every agency for better training; every influence lengthening the period in home and school, exerts a more than proportionate influence on wages. For it attacks the problem at the point of greatest intensity. It relieves the extreme pressure of over competition in the labor market exerted by those having only docility, deftness and speed to offer. It alleviates the self exploitation of these over eager sellers of the qualities of youth.

Of scarcely less importance than the question of age is that of race. Consider first, evidence from the cotton industry correlating age, race, and wages. The basis of comparison followed here is hourly earnings. This avoids the disturbing effects of fluctuations in employment. The report ¹ covers 8060 female workers in Massachusetts cotton mills. It indicates a strong massing of numbers in the years 16 to 24 inclusive; 3991, nearly half the female workers, being of those ages. The maximum hourly wage of all races combined is 15.4 cents per hour earned by 965 females at the ages 35 to 44 years. From 25 to 34 years earnings are 14.8 cents, and from 45 to 49, 15.1 cents. They consistently exceed 14 cents in the age group 22 to 39 except for 338 workers, aged 23, earning 13.8 cents. These ages include 3705 of the 8060 women.

The most significant fact in the table is that the Americans and each of the races of older immigration have maximum earnings in excess of those for all workers and in general attain their maximum efficiency as late or later. On the other hand, the races of newer

¹ Bureau of Labor Report, vol. i, pp. 718-719.

immigration have lower maximum earnings and in general attain their highest efficiency in a much earlier age period. The 629 Americans have maximum earnings of 16.3 cents attained by 31 workers at 30 to 34 years of age. Hourly earnings are over 14 cents in the age period 21 to 54 years, except for 21 workers aged 23 earning 13.8 cents. These ages include 257 of the 629 workers. The French Canadians have maximum earnings of 15.5 cents earned by 92 workers at 40 to 44 years of age, and again by 27 at 50 to 54 years. Earnings are in excess of 14 cents per hour during the entire period from 24 to 59 years of age, covering 849 out of 2108 workers. The highest maximum of all is attained by the English workers, 20 of whom, from 45 to 49 years of age, earn 17.7 cents per hour. Their earnings exceed 14 cents per hour for the full normal working life, that is, from 18 to 64 years of age. This includes 673 of 862 workers. The Irish women have a maximum earning capacity of 16.1 cents attained by 201 workers from 35 to 39 years of age. They consistently earn in excess of 14 cents per hour from 22 to 54 years of age. These years include 1037 out of 1608 workers.

Far different are the results for the races of newer immigration. Italian women number 66, and attain their maximum hourly earning power of 13.7 cents at 21 years of age. Four earn this. Next highest are four others, aged 30 to 39 years, who received 12.3 cents. Of 1440 Polish workers, maximum earnings are reported for 76 workers aged 24 earning 13.2 cents per hour. The 263 women just older, aged 25 to 34, earn 13.1 cents. No others earn as much. The Portuguese women are the only race of newer immigration of whom any are reported as earning in excess of 14 cents. The maximum, 14.6 cents, is reached by 55 women aged 22, and 65 others aged 25 to 29 earn 14.3 cents; 7, aged

45 to 49, earn 14.5 cents. This makes 127 of the 588 workers.

Similar evidence is drawn from the men's clothing industry.¹ Here the table of hourly earnings covers 6050 females over 16 years of age, by race and cities, but the study does not give the age division in detail. Following the division between Americans and older immigrants, and the newer immigrant races, we find that the 326 Americans earn in excess of 14 cents per hour in each city, except Baltimore, where earnings in general range lower. Here 62 American women earn 9.2 cents per hour. The maximum is 14.8 cents received in Chicago. The 801 German women earn over 14 cents, except in Philadelphia and Baltimore, where earnings are 13.8 for 95 women, and 10.1 cents for 31 women, respectively. All but one of the 213 Scandinavians reported are in Chicago and earn an average of 17.7 cents per hour. The 851 Bohemians are from Chicago also, with the exception of 5, and earn 16.4 cents per hour.

Of the newer races the 1063 Hebrew women have a maximum of 13.5 cents earned by 102 workers in Philadelphia; 385 in Chicago earn 13 cents; 202 in Baltimore, 10.9 cents — the minimum for the group. The Italian women number 1587. Their maximum earning capacity is attained in Chicago where 265 women earn 12 cents per hour; 802 in New York earn but 10.5 cents. This is the lowest quotation for this race, except for 18 workers in Baltimore earning 10.2 cents. Six hundred and thirteen of the 692 Polish women are in Chicago, and earn 14.2 cents, the maximum for the group. This is below the general average for Chicago of 14.8 cents, and is exceeded by the Americans and each of the older immigrant races in that city.

¹ Bureau of Labor Report, vol. ii, p. 197.

Of the 115 Lithuanians reported, 77 are in Chicago and have earnings of but 10 cents an hour. This is the minimum reported for the group, tho they never receive so much as 12 cents an hour. Further evidence of the relation of race to the question of wage, and more particularly of the relation of recent immigration to the question of low wages for women workers may be found in other volumes of the Bureau of Labor report and in that of the Immigration Commission.¹ It is perhaps less exact and complete, less readily presented, but all lends support to the general conclusion that among the youthful and ill paid female wage earners, the immigrant women are the worst paid of all. What happens is that these women, lacking knowledge of American conditions, of the language and of the condition of the labor market, without specialized skill, training or aptitude, with the lowest standards of living, and driven by the severest economic pressure, snatch eagerly at any opportunity for employment and any wage which may offer.

To these disabilities they add that of extreme youth. The Census of 1900 showed that nearly 50 per cent of all foreign born women aged 15 to 24 were at work. The corresponding figures for the native born white classes are 20.1 per cent for those of native parentage, and 37.5 per cent for those of foreign parentage. All these handicaps can only be overcome by accepting lower wages and harder conditions of employment.² The

¹ See for example, vol. i, p. 367, *Wages of Women over 18 in the cotton industry*, where practically every group of new immigrant women falls below the general average wage, as practically every other group rises above it. Similar results are shown in other industries.

² See e. g., vol. xviii, Bureau of Labor Report, p. 239, discussing the cause of Americans leaving the industry of nuts, bolts, and screws. The reason most generally ascribed being "that the work had so many unpleasant features and paid so little that only the poorest and most ignorant of recent immigrants were willing to undertake it." Cf. vol. xviii, p. 328, and Butler, *Women and the Trades*, pp. 228-229. "Two-thirds of the women in the metal trades are Slavs, Hungarians, Germans, Polish, and Crotean . . . recent immigrants . . . foreign women who ask neither for comfort nor for cleanliness nor higher wages."

ready acceptance of both conditions by recent immigrants has earned for them the ill will of their fellow workers,¹ and has often resulted in discriminations against them by employers.²

Unfortunately the results of the Census of 1910 so far as published do not furnish data for estimating the importance of the newly immigrated with low standards of living in the problem of women's work and wages. As noted above, the age divisions are defective. Such as they are, they are not correlated with nativity groups or occupational classification, and beyond this there is no attempt to present a classification by race, age, and occupation. The vast immigration in the last ten years makes data from the 1900 census obsolete, but it must serve in default of better evidence. The significant fact here is the exceedingly high percentages among the foreign born in the younger age groups including those 15 to 24 years of age. It thus results that while the total foreign born women of these ages represent less than 12 per cent of all white women of these ages, still foreign born wage earners represent 20 per cent of all at those ages. This is to say, that in 1900 these foreign born youthful workers — least efficient, on the basis of the wage statistics, of all such workers, — represented one-fifth of the labor supply at those ages. Since that date we have had an enormous immigration drawn, for the most part, from the sections of Europe where the lowest standards of living prevail. It is most unfortunate that the Census has not furnished corresponding statistics for 1910, or given us the data by races; they could hardly fail to show an increasing proportion of foreign born women in the younger and least efficient age groups.

¹ Miss Van Kleeck speaks of the Italian flower workers in this connection. See also Bureau of Labor Report, vol. i, p. 116, and vol. ii, p. 195.

² Bureau of Labor Report, vol. iii, p. 418.

Adding, then, industrial inefficiency to the fact of this abnormal proportion of youthful workers, we realize the importance of this factor in the problem of women's wages. It represents nothing short of a massed assault on the existing wage scale. It bears down the present standards — unsatisfactory as they are — by sheer weight of numbers and inefficiency. If minimum wage laws are to be interposed as a barrier for the protection of women wage earners, common prudence would seem to dictate a counter attack to check and drive back this assault. Bearing in mind the gap between actual earnings and the standards adopted for the minimum wage it would seem evident that the champions of the new legislation will be ardent advocates also of some limitation of the free immigration of women workers, at least such limitation as will exclude those of greatest inefficiency and lowest standards of living.

It is well known that these foreign born women are for the most part, not independent workers, but members of families. They live at home and the great majority of them turn their earnings into the family treasury. The youthfulness of women at work would suggest that this was the typical situation of all nativity groups. Such a situation would have large influence on the wage situation. An answer to the question, what proportion of working women live at home, is found in the Bureau of Labor's investigation of stores and factories.¹ This shows that 77 per cent of over 2000 women in stores, and 82 per cent of over 5000 women in factories live at home.² The Census in 1900³

¹ See vol. v, p. 15.

² Cf. McLean, *Wage Earning Women*, pp. 29, 54, 72, and 82.

	No. Reported	Living at Home	Per cent at Home
New York	1,476	1,304	88
Chicago	1,914	1,618	84
New England . .	1,289	1,021	79
New Jersey	824	714	87

³ *Statistics of Women at Work*, pp. 25-26.

attempted a study of the family relationships of 1,232,000 working women in 27 cities. This shows 64.8 per cent living at home and 35.2 per cent boarding. Boarding is defined to include those living with their employer, — obviously a very important inclusion when servants and waitresses are concerned. Omitting these workers, we have 905,000, of whom 80.9 per cent are living at home 14.4 per cent as heads of families, 33.7 per cent living with their fathers, 15.5 per cent with mothers and 17.2 per cent with some other relative. Of the native born of foreign parentage only 12.3 per cent are boarding; of native parentage 26.6 per cent; of the foreign born 22.6 per cent; and of negro women 17 per cent. There seems to be no significant variation in the percentages living at home when the division is made by conjugal condition, except that of foreign born, and of negro, married and widowed women relatively small percentages are boarding. There is considerable variation by cities, but only four cities, including Boston, show more than 25 per cent boarding.

Of importance also is the number of breadwinners found in the families of which these workers were a part. Of the 905,000 women included, 70 per cent were living in families in which there were other breadwinners; among these, in 24 per cent there was one other; 20.8 per cent, two others; and in 25 per cent at least three others. Considering only the single women, 73.6 per cent were living in families with other wage earners present. The percentage rises to 82.7 per cent for single workers of foreign parentage, and is 66.8 per cent for those of foreign birth. Of the 678,000 single women included, 19.1 per cent are boarding and but 6.5 per cent of those in homes are in families in which there is no other wage earner. It may be added in regard to the 19 per cent boarding, that it by no means neces-

sarily follows that they are all dependent entirely on their own resources.

Investigation of the expenditure of earnings disposes effectively of the importance of the "pin money" worker as a determining factor in wages. Recent reports are a unit in declaring that such workers are the rare exception; too few to seriously affect the general situation.¹ Further, the investigations show conclusively that the larger part of the earnings of women living at home is turned into the family treasury. Thus in the Massachusetts report it is stated ² that 78.5 per cent of the candy workers gave all they earned to the family; 20.3 per cent gave part. Among store workers, where the result is not affected by the presence in large numbers of foreign workers, 61.8 per cent gave all, 39.4 per cent gave a part. It is noted that the age runs higher among these workers. The laundry workers make a similar showing: 60 per cent contribute all their earnings; 39.1 per cent a part. Figures for the glass industry ³ allow a nativity comparison. It is shown that 227 children, 16 years of age and over, contribute 86.4 per cent of their earnings to the family. The native born whites, of native parentage gave 81 per cent; those of foreign parentage 85 per cent; and the foreign born, over 90 per cent. In the case of races of the newer immigration practically all the wage goes to the family treasury. Particularly in the case of the Slavs and Italians, it is declared "a social custom for the mother of the household to act as treasurer, and to receive the earnings of the working members."

¹ For example, the Massachusetts Report (pp. 79, 140, 175) found only 1.2 per cent among candy workers, 3.3 per cent of 2,276 store girls, and less than 1 per cent among the laundry employees. All reports seem a unit in presenting similar results.

² Massachusetts Report, pp. 79, 140, and 318. Miss McLean gives useful percentages. See the pages noted above.

³ Bureau of Labor Report, vol. iii, pp. 527-528. This may be compared with the various reports of the Immigration Commission.

Some part of the wage may occasionally be returned to the older children.

In the case of girls in stores and factories as covered by the Bureau of Labor Report ¹ the question of disposal of wages is correlated with age. It is rarely true in the various cities that the percentage of girls living at home who contribute no part of the wage rise to 5. Of women 25 years of age and older it is generally true that over 50 per cent give all their earnings. In New York 76 per cent of 190 factory girls over that age contribute their entire wage. Younger girls, as would be expected, almost always show higher percentages.²

It boots little to multiply illustrations, for the conclusion reiterated and enforced by the unanimous declarations of the investigation of many industries and localities, of the various nativity groups and races, and at all ages, is that the typical female workers are the 80 per cent living at home and contributing the larger part of their earnings to the family treasury. The "pin money" worker is proven a false, if not a "vicious" theory. Twenty per cent of the girls at most are independent workers. The remainder — a proportion great enough to be controlling — are constituent parts of a close knit family group.³ The pains of their labor

¹ See vol. v, pp. 19-21.

² The Connecticut Report gives the following results, p. 253.

	NUMBER	ALL		PART		NONE	
		No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Native White;							
Native Parentage	454	280	61.6	164	36.1	10	2.2
Foreign Parentage	887	620	69.9	259	29.2	8	.9
Foreign Born	660	493	74.6	163	24.7	4	.6
All	2,001	1,393	69.6	586	29.2	22	1.1

³ Cf. Report on Lawrence Strike, p. 20. "These wages, however, are not peculiar to Lawrence. The wages of textile workers in that city are not lower than in most other textile towns. The plain fact is that the textile industry, so far as earnings are concerned, is in large part a 'family industry.' It gives employment to men, women, and children. The normal family of five, unless the father is employed in one of the comparatively few better-paying occupations, is compelled to furnish two wage earners in order to secure the necessities of life."

are reckoned in the sacrifices of the family; their earnings merge in the family income. Tho the effect of this condition has been well enough understood by the employers,¹ it has been misinterpreted on the basis of the "pin money" theory. It has not been recognized, or at least not accepted, in the current minimum wage reasoning. There, it has been postulated that the female worker is, or at least ought to be, an independent worker entitled to sufficient wages for full self-support. Any industry paying less is forthwith termed parasitic. However desirable this may be from an ideal standpoint, the actual situation is otherwise. The true social unit here is the family. It has a certain potential labor supply. Its members have certain desires for leisure, for education, for the various goods that make up income. They escape the pains of labor when possible, saving their necessary or strongly desired income. Normally, in the long run, workers cannot be secured for less than an income sufficient for full support at the established standard, including allowances for support in the period of youth and old age, for training and for the replacement fund. But temporarily the wage may fall in evil times to the minimum sufficient for the scantiest supply of food. The satisfaction of all other wants is deferred to a more favorable season. It is better to labor for the pittance than to starve. In the family a similar situation exists. The father's wage is insufficient for the family needs at the customary standard. If the daughters were independent units in the labor supply and if there was no pressure of economic necessity, the wage offered must be as large as full support for the present and past years would require. But since the family must maintain all its

¹ Butler, *Women and the Trades*, p. 346. "We try to employ girls who are members of families," a box manufacturer said to me, "for we don't pay the girls a living wage in this trade."

members in any case, it takes stock of its available labor and sells at the market rate. As in the case of railroad transportation, the price may fall in the worst case near to the extra cost involved in performing the extra service. In this case this service is represented by the labor performed by the daughter. The family foregoes the payment for the period of youth and training. There is nothing to set aside for old age. Recreation is foregone; education neglected. The wage may be less than the necessary cost of the daughter's support. But that support is a part of the irreducible "fixed charges" of the family treasury, and if the labor of the child will yield any contribution to the hard pressed exchequer of the family, it is accounted worth while — even necessary. This is quite as true and quite as well justified by the logic of the situation as the cut rate offered by the traffic manager of the bankrupt railroad.

It is this bankrupt condition of the working families that dictates the entrance of youthful female workers into industry. It is severer pressure met by lower economic strength that causes an increase of the percentage of females, 16 to 20 years of age and at work, from 20.8 per cent for the native born of native parentage to 40 per cent for those of foreign parentage and to 56.8 per cent for those of foreign birth.¹ Wages are low for women at work primarily because, with the increasing pressure of population, and the influx of families bringing low standards of living joined with scant industrial efficiency, it becomes necessary for more members of the family to bear a portion of the family's labor sacrifices and this through a longer term of years. The inevitable result is severe competition among these workers of lowest standards, least skill and efficiency,

¹ Census, 1900, volume on Occupations, p. cxviii.

and consequent low wages. Thus dictated by necessity, it is justified by results in the economics of the individual families. It is unjustifiable only from the larger viewpoint of its effect on the character of the national citizenship. It is from this viewpoint that it is attacked with the weapon of minimum wage laws, and rightly so. But there is certain loss involved in misinterpretation of the character of the position attacked. One error of the forces backing this legislation lies in regarding each female worker as an independent labor unit. Instead the true labor unit is the family. Despite the change following the industrial revolution, solidarity and coöperation in the bearing of labor sacrifices are still the typical condition there.¹ The wage of the working woman can only be understood when the interpretation is made on that basis.

V. MINIMUM WAGES AND THE POTENTIAL LABOR SUPPLY

Closely associated with the above discussion of the effect of the family condition of working women on their wage is a further factor in the situation which minimum wage boards and commissions must consider. This is found in the presence of what may be called a potential labor supply. There are indications that in the case of female labor this supply may be very great. Thus a special study made of the adoption and abandonment of occupations by native born white women, due allowance being made for deaths and migration, shows that the women aged 15 to 24 in 1890, and advanced to the age 34-39 in 1900, made a loss of 24.5

¹ Cf. Van Kleeck, *Flower Makers*, p. 72. "Economic pressure is recognized as an important factor in the wage bargain, and signs are not lacking to indicate that the wage received is in inverse ratio to the pressure. It is the worker nearest starvation who is most liable to accept starvation wages," and the complaint of the home worker, p. 110, "Flowers is cheap work now. The boss used to pay much better. But there's always poorer and poorer people and they'll do it for less. They have a lot of children, and it don't take them long to make a dollar. So they do it for less than us."

per cent in the numbers of breadwinners.¹ In round numbers 274,000 more of these women abandoned the wage earning field, than adopted it, during that ten years. This loss is more than 5 per cent of the total number of women wage earners 15 years of age and over — 5,007,000 — returned in 1900. In the next age group, those 25–34 in 1890, there is a loss of 33,600, or 7.5 per cent. In the next two, those 35–44 and 45–54 in 1890, a gain of 18.3 per cent and 10.1 per cent respectively, and in the final period, — those 55 and over in 1890, — a loss of 4.6 per cent. The gain in the two periods mentioned is slight among native born women of foreign parentage, being 5.8 per cent and 5.7 per cent respectively — less than 4000 women. The gain at that age is explained as due, in large proportion, to the taking up, by widows of farmers, of the occupation of their deceased husbands. The conclusion is, that among native born women workers a net loss of well over a quarter of a million results from the abandonment of their wage earners' status by those who had been so engaged in the ages 15 to 24. This loss is made good, of course, by the entry of new thousands of young girls. It is quite within the possibilities that a rise in the wage offered, from the existing rates to a minimum wage of \$8.00 or \$8.50, may induce no inconsiderable percentage of those native born women to postpone their abandonment of industry and lengthen the period of labor.

Further possibilities are disclosed by examination of the percentages of women at work in the various age and nativity groups previously quoted. If the native born of native parentage had furnished in 1900 as high a proportion of female workers aged 16–35 as did those of foreign parentage the net increase would have been over 890,000 workers. If the percentages were those

¹ Statistics of Women at Work, 1900, p. 24.

of the foreign born, the gain would have been over 1,220,000. Raising the percentage of those of foreign parentage to these highest percentages gives a further gain of 134,000 women at work. The total number returned in 1900 was but little over 5,300,000. At existing wages a considerable percentage of native born young women find it desirable to devote their time and energy to other pursuits than industry. They enjoy greater educational opportunities. They constitute America's great leisure class. They serve in the homes and in social agencies of various sorts. Necessity does not compel them to leave the home; nor do the wages proffered attract them. But it is entirely possible, even largely probable, that the enhanced wage contemplated by our minimum wage laws and boards may draw some part of this labor supply, at present unexploited, into the industrial ranks for longer or shorter periods. These potential laborers are the most efficient workers, rather than the least. More highly endowed, they are also better trained and have the advantage of larger opportunities. What would be the result if, through the attractiveness of the higher wage scale, members of this potential labor supply enlarge the industrial ranks to the extent of even one per cent? It would seem that it might easily do more.

A final suggestion may be made, tho in the present regrettable state of our information it cannot be statistically supported. There is good reason to believe that a considerable proportion of our women at work are not full time workers. The Census of 1900 showed that of women in domestic service, manufacture and trade, over 18 per cent were unemployed some part of the year; that more than half of these workers were idle over three months and 16 per cent from 7 to 12 months.¹

¹ Such casual workers are reported in the millinery trade of Kansas City. The season is three months long in spring and fall. Girls come from town and country and

We need comprehensive data showing what proportion of our female workers are employed but part of the year and this at their own motion. The worker under present conditions for three or six months in times of exceptional demand, and so of unusually high wage, might easily become a full time worker if the minimum wage movement reaches its expected result. For the desired legal wage is probably near the present exceptional wage of these part time workers. The character of the labor force attracted by canning factories, hop picking and other seasonal employments suggests that this may be a factor of considerable importance. The census figures suggest that it might add as much as 5 per cent to the entire female labor force. Higher wages then, legally enforced, may attract additional female workers of exceptional efficiency through the lengthening of the period of employment, by drawing more largely on the ranks of the nativity groups at present least numerously represented and by transferring part time into full time workers.¹ If in any or all

remain in their homes during the "off season." In the Oregon report, p. 34, speaking of the canneries; "They employ a class of women, often mothers of households, who do not work away from home the other six months of the year." In the Washington Report, p. 28, "it is well known that a certain per cent of women who work in fruit canneries are merely 'summer workers,' women in families who wish to help out the income by this extra work." Van Kleeck, *Flower Workers*, p. 57; "The 'cheap and docile home workers' after the long dull months when they have no work . . . are eager to toil until late at night, producing in a short time enough goods to supply the market for the season."

¹ A further possibility is the substitution of men for women. That a wage of over \$8.00 might attract certain immigrant races is clear. The following figures are for males 18 years of age and over engaged in manufacturing and mining; —

Race	No.	Average Weekly Wage	Per cent Earning Under \$7.50
Greeks	4,154	\$8.41	45.1
So. Italian . . .	7,821	9.61	24.4
Portuguese . . .	3,125	8.10	45.8
Syrians	812	8.12	45.8
Turkish	240	7.65	57.5
<hr/>		<hr/>	
All Foreign Born	139,610	\$11.92	9.9

Of nearly 140,000 foreign born 36.8 per cent earned under \$10.00. A slight advantage in efficiency would make them acceptable over women at \$8.50. Imm. Comm. Report, vol. i, p. 375.

of these ways the active labor force is increased even so much as two or three per cent the pressure on the newly established standard would be great — perhaps unsupportable. This would come about through the loss of employment by a corresponding percentage of the least efficient workers.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study, then, indicates a broadening of the field of woman employment in trade and a continued progress of the industrial revolution that makes certain the growing importance of female wage earners in American industries. It shows that perhaps 15 per cent of such wage earners actually earn less than \$4.00; 50 per cent less than \$6.00; and 75 per cent less than \$8.00. There is an average loss in wage of perhaps 10 per cent in each week due to lost time and a further loss, perhaps as great, due to seasonal and monthly unemployment. Actual earnings then are much below the proposed legal wages of \$8.00 per week or more. Local reasons for low wage are found in the immobility of the female labor force. General causes are the youthful character of the force, signifying inefficiency; the temporary nature of women's work, meaning inexperienced workers; the unrestrained competition of the youthful foreign born and newly immigrated in numbers out of proportion to the total numbers of the nativity group, introducing low standards of wage and living; and in the fact that women, or girls, at work are constituent members of families and their wage a subsidiary source of family income. In those families driven by the severest economic pressure the wage accepted for the unskilled female laborers is analogous to the rate accepted by the traffic manager of a bankrupt railroad

for low grade freight. Anything that yields any contribution over extra-expense incurred for the families' "fixed charge," *i. e.* their general cost of living, is acceptable.

The disabilities of the women workers might almost be reduced to one — lack of skill. In the total labor force they form a separate non-competing group lower than any male group. How severe is this handicap — lack of skill — is indicated by very important and significant statistics from Pittsburgh.¹ These recognize that very nearly identical processes run through many fields of women's employments. The following table is constructed on the basis of skill:

NUMBER OF WOMEN IN VARIOUS OCCUPATION GROUPS

Kind of Work	No. of Women	Percentage
Skilled work	139	.8
Handicraft	305	1.9
Hand work requiring dexterity .	3,641	23.2
Machine operating	4,885	31.1
Machine	2,188	13.9
Wrapping and labelling	2,118	13.3
Hand work requiring no dexterity	2,475	15.8
	<hr/> 15,751	<hr/> 100.0

The skilled workers are the millinery trimmers and telegraph operators; possessors of a handicraft are stogie makers, expert workers in millinery houses and fine ironers in laundries. All told these constitute less than 3 per cent of the 15,751 workers included. Here then is a final suggestion of needed support to the minimum wage movement. There should be determined efforts to raise the legal age of entering employment;² to limit the numbers of the newly immigrated

¹ Butler, *Women and the Trades*. This table appears on p. 369. The total is corrected.

² Such a movement, intended to raise the age limit to 16 years, is reported in Illinois, where its passage may precede minimum wage legislation.

sending youthful and highly inefficient workers with low standards of living into our industries; and there should be a realization of the fact that women wage earners are ill paid because they are unskilled workers. This condition must be met by trade training.¹ There can be no question that the minimum wage movement is correct in principle. But that the nine American states which have already legislated, even if joined by as many more, can at once raise the wage rates over \$8.00 ² per week seems problematical. In addition to the great gap between actual earnings and the proposed wage rates, there is the too little understood factor of potential female workers. These are of higher efficiency and may be attracted in very considerable numbers by the proposed higher rates. In any case such states will do well to support minimum wage legislation with the further measures suggested above.

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¹ This was clearly stated in the Oregon report, p. 24. "Lack of training undoubtedly has much to do with inefficiency. This is a burden which must be assumed by society at large and disposed of by some kind of industrial training for girls as well as for boys. Until education of this sort is compulsory, some of the evils of low efficiency will remain."

² It seems clear that we have here an attempt to establish a rate "substantially higher" than the market rate. See the discussion in Taussig's *Principles of Economics*, vol. ii, pp. 299 et seq.